

Warning

This fact sheet aims to let you know the side effects most commonly seen following the administration of your treatment. Please note that when you take any medication, there is a possibility that it causes rare side effects and it is difficult to predict which patients will be affected.

General information for patient Cisplatin and gemcitabine

Date: *September 2003*

Revision date: *April 2016*

Medication	Administration
Cisplatin	Intravenous infusion over a few hours, according to the dosage, on day 1
Gemcitabine	Intravenous infusion over 30 minutes on day 1 and day 8 of each cycle.
Treatment repeated every 3 weeks	

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General Information associated with your treatment

- › These medications are used to prevent the multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be done regularly during your treatment. Depending on the results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of the medication might be adjusted or the treatment might be delayed.
- › You may experience **fatigue** during your treatments. This is usually only temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease). Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.
- › Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- › Your **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with *finer herbes* or lemon juice. Eating fruits and non sugared candies, chewing non-sugared gums, etc., may mask the metallic taste.
- › **Alcohol** (in small quantities) is permitted and will not affect the efficacy of the treatments.
- › You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. Your partner will not be exposed to, nor harmed by chemotherapy effects. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress etc.)
- › For **male patients**, the sperm count may be affected. In fact, the production of spermatozooids may be reduced or completely absent during treatments. This reduction of **fertility** does not prevent erection or sexual activity. In certain patients, this reduction of fertility may be permanent, may ameliorate or return to normal after the treatments have stopped.
- › In **pre-menopausal female patients**, chemotherapy may cause irregularities or cessation of the menstrual cycle during treatments. The menstrual cycle, after stopping chemotherapy, may restart or return to normal. It may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy may be possible and a method of **contraception** is strongly recommended during treatments. Chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo. Breast-feeding is contra-indicated during chemotherapy.
- › Consult your doctor or pharmacist before you take other medications (even over the counter medications available without a prescription) or **natural health products**. These may provoke an interaction with your treatment and diminish its efficacy or increase side effects.
- › Follow the instructions given by your cancer center about the right way to handle and dispose of biological fluids (for example urine, stools) in order to protect the environment and your relatives.
- › Be sure to always have on hand the complete list of your medications, dietary supplements, vitamins and other natural health products. Give it to your doctor and your pharmacist. It is important to make them aware of any change.

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Adverse effects and their management

Adverse effects	Management
Severe nausea and vomiting may occur and persist up to 5 days following your treatment.	› You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment with cisplatin. At home, you will take medication on a regular basis and as needed for at least 2 days following your treatment.
Nausea , usually light, may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment with gemcitabine alone	› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if the nausea or vomiting is not relieved by your medication.
Depending on the individual, thinning of the hair may occur. In general, this happens 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair will grow back after treatments have ended.	› Use gentle shampoo. › Avoid brushing hair vigorously. › Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 1 week following the beginning of your treatment and may last for about 10 days. You may be at higher risk to contact infections during this period.	› Wash your hands often. › During this period, avoid coming into contact with people who have contagious diseases. › Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while urinating...). › Consult your doctor or go immediately to the Emergency Room if you have a fever 38,3 °C (101°F) once or 38 °C (100,4 °F) twice an hour apart. › In case of fever, do not take acetaminophen (Ex: Tylenol®, Atasol®) and anti-inflammatory medication (Ex : Motrin®, Advil®).

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A decrease in platelets may occur about 7 to 10 days following treatment. You may bleed more easily than you normally do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin[®], ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.› Consult a member of your healthcare team if you bruise more easily than you normally do or if you have a tendency to bleed easily from the nose or the gums.
You may experience a decrease of red blood cells following your treatment. This phenomenon is called anemia and is characterised by signs of fatigue, pale color, dizziness and shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Keep active but respect signs of fatigue your body gives you; rest when you feel the need to.› If you notice one or any of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team.
Flu-like symptoms may occur shortly after your treatment. You may experience mild to moderate symptoms consisting mainly of fever but also chills, headache, muscle or bone pain. These symptoms last only a few hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If these symptoms bother you, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a pain killer such as acetaminophen (Tylenol[®], Atasol[®]).› If you experience fever and chills more than 48 hours after your treatment, you may have an infection. Notify your doctor immediately or go to the Emergency Room.
Gradual fluid retention may occur with consecutive treatments and may present itself by swelling of the feet and hands, shortness of breath or rapid weight gain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Elevate your feet when sitting down.› Avoid wearing tight clothes or shoes.› Notify your physician if you experience rapid weight gain, shortness of breath or if you feel swollen.
Rash may appear following your treatment. It is usually mild and can appear on arms, legs, back and chest with or without itching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Notify a member of your healthcare team if this symptom occur and affect your daily activities. Some measures can be recommended.

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Cisplatin may affect your kidneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink lots of water and liquids (10 - 12 glasses of 230 ml or 8 oz. a day) for 48 - 72 hours following your treatment (unless otherwise recommended by your doctor) and urinate frequently.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if you notice urinating less often.
Cisplatin may cause ringing in your ears and rarely hearing loss .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If symptoms persist between treatments, speak to a member of your healthcare team at the time of your next treatment.
Leg weakness, numbness or tingling of hand and feet may occur. These symptoms usually increase with the number of treatments given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› If you experience these symptoms, speak to a member of your healthcare team at your next visit.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

from ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)